

REMARKS

The claims are 1, 5, 6, 8 to 10, 14, 16 and 17.

The above amendment is responsive to points set forth in the Advisory Action dated July 26, 2007 and the Final Rejection dated April 5, 2007.

In this regard, features from claim 7 have been incorporated in claim 1 and features from claim 15 have been incorporated in claim 10.

In the Final Rejection, claims 1, 5 to 10, 14 and 15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Van Zoeren (U.S. 5,506,086).

This rejection is again respectfully traversed.

Applicants again reiterate the reasons in reply to the above rejection in the response filed July 3, 2007.

In the Advisory Action, it was stated:

The rejection is maintained for reasons of record. Van Zoeren teaches making a flexographic printing plate, IR layer, non-IR layer which is sensitive to actinic radiation, i.e. UV radiation. The flexographic plate has the same components and is capable of functioning in the same manner.

In reply, with regard to the relief printing plate recited in the present application, only a part of the mask layer in the infrared irradiated area is removed, and not removed entirely. Therefore, a part of the mask layer remains at the bottom of the infrared irradiated area. Since the mask layer at the bottom has already lost its ultraviolet absorbability by the infrared irradiation, upon irradiating the ultraviolet radiation, the ultraviolet radiation penetrates through the mask layer at the bottom, thereby curing the photosensitive resin layer (refer to page 8, line 18, to page 10, line 18, in the present specification).

Further, claim 1 recites "the deactivation of the ultraviolet absorbability in response to receiving said infrared radiation takes place along with ablation of the mask layer . . . ". However, it cannot be said that claim 1 clearly describes a point in which a part of the mask layer is removed.

Accordingly, new claims 16 and 17 recite the point at which a part of the mask layer in the infrared irradiated area is removed and that the mask layer that remains at the bottom of the

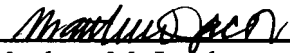
infrared irradiated area loses its ultraviolet absorbability. Accordingly, new claims 16 and 17 which recite this feature are even further remote from the reference teachings.

No further issues remaining, allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner has any comments or proposals for expediting prosecution, please contact undersigned at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,

Toshiya TAKAGI et al.

By: 
Matthew M. Jacob
Registration No. 25,154
Attorney for Applicants

MJ/aas
Washington, D.C. 20006-1021
Telephone (202) 721-8200
Facsimile (202) 721-8250
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